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RADIO'S INVENTIVE "TALK OF VERMONT" IS ABOUT TO GROW SILENT
(By Chris Bohjalian)

It is an overcast weekday morning smack in the center of summer. It is hot and sticky, and there's absolutely nothing in the air that might be mistaken for a breeze.

I am leaning against the side of a gazebo in Middlebury during the town's annual celebration on the green, waiting for Jeff Kaufman, host of the WFAD radio show "The Talk of Vermont," to arrive. The show is about to broadcast live from the commons.

Abruptly, a slim guy with hair the color of sand just after the surf has receded coasts across the grass on a bicycle with a copy of one of my books under his arm. He says something I can't hear to the engineer, who is battling with miles of wires and the sort of microphone that I thought existed only in radio and television museums, and the engineer laughs. Then he turns to me and introduces himself.

This is Kaufman, and no more than 90 seconds later—still without breaking a sweat, despite the heat and his last-minute arrival—he has me seated in a folding metal chair, and we are on the air. It is clear within minutes that he not only has read my most recent novel, he has read the ones that preceded it. All of them. He has read the column I write for this newspaper. He has read a surprising number of the articles I have written for different magazines.

You have no idea how rare this is.

I have done easily a hundred-plus radio and television interviews in my life, and the vast majority of the time the very first question I am asked is this: "So, tell us about your new book." The reason? There is a not a soul in the studio other than me, including the person with whom I am speaking, who has the slightest idea what the book is about.

In truth, why should they? How could they? Think of the number of guests who pass through a radio or television talk show every week. It's huge, and it takes time to read a novel.

Almost every weekday morning for the better part of a decade, Kaufman has done his homework on his guests and then offered the state some of the very best radio in Vermont. Sometimes his show has been broadcast on five stations, and sometimes it has been on only one, but it has never affected the first-rate quality of the program.

It was three years ago that I met Kaufman on the commons in Middlebury, and I have come to discover that day in, day out he corralled terrific guests. Lily Tomlin one day, Ted Williams the next. One morning he might be moderating a live debate between U.S. Senate hopefuls Jan Backus and Ed Flanagan, and the next he might be chatting with Middlebury biographer, poet and novelist Jay Parini about—basketball.

On any given day, he was as likely to have an acrobat from the Big Apple Circus performing—literally—on the stool in his studio as he was to have an expert from Washington, D.C., on the proposed "Star Wars" missile defense system.

Now, alas, we are about to begin Kaufman's last week. He and his family are leaving for California in early August, and Kaufman will no longer be a fixture on Vermont radio. There is no question in my mind that this is a real loss—and not simply because Kaufman is a first-rate interviewer and radio personality. He was also a part of the community. He used his show to find food and clothes for those families that had to leave their homes after the summer flood of 1998, and to raise money to help build a new Lincoln Library.

Sometimes I wonder if Kaufman had the ratings he deserved, but regardless of whether he had 12 or 1,200 people tuned in, he never gave his audience a small-market effort. Happy trails, my friend. We'll miss you.●

MS. LORIE FOOCE NAMED ACHIEVER OF THE MONTH

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, in October of 1993, the State of Michigan Family Independence Agency commemorated the first anniversary of its landmark welfare reform initiative, "To Strengthen Michigan Families," by naming its first Achiever of the Month. In each month since, the award has been given to an individual who participates in the initiative and has shown outstanding progress toward self-sufficiency. I rise today to recognize Ms. Lorie Fooce, the recipient of the award for the month of July, 2000.

Ms. Fooce, a single mother, applied for assistance in August, 1994, in order to provide for her family. She was approved for ACD/FIP, food stamps, and Medicaid. At the time, Ms. Fooce lacked the necessary job skills and experience to maintain a steady, sufficient income. However, within that same month, she took the initiative to enroll in Certified Nurses Aid (C.N.A.) training through Work First.

Ms. Fooce was able to complete the training and was subsequently hired by Gogebic Medical Care. With the help of Work First, which paid for the C.N.A. training, testing fees, transportation, and uniforms, she has become a valued employee at Gogebic.

Ms. Fooce's FIP case closed in May, 1999. In order to best care for her family, she currently receives food stamps, Medicaid, and day care assistance to supplement her earnings.

I applaud Ms. Lorie Fooce for being named Achiever of the Month for July of 2000. She has shown a sincere dedication to her job and to the goals of self-improvement and self-sufficiency, and the progress she has made shows both great effort and great determination. On behalf of the entire United States Senate, I congratulate Ms. Fooce, and wish her continued success in the future.●

RECOGNITION OF STATE SENATOR JACKIE VAUGHN III

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I want to pay tribute today to a remarkable person from my home state of Michigan, Senator Jackie Vaughn III. On July 30, Senator Vaughn, the Associate President Pro Tempore for the Michigan State Senate, will be honored for his tireless public service to Detroit and the entire state of Michigan.

Senator Vaughn's history of public service is truly deserving of recognition. For the past twenty-two years this "Man of Peace" has represented the Fourth Senatorial District of Michigan with a sense of justice and concern for all members of society. He has drafted wide-ranging legislation

that has, among other things, sought to expand voting rights, promote peace and provide educational opportunities for all citizens.

Such a diverse array of interests and concerns should come as no surprise to those who know Jackie. Senator Vaughn is a renaissance man who has been educated at many of the world's finest institutions of higher learning. The recipient of a Fullbright Scholarship, Senator Vaughn has received the Oxon B. Litt from England's Oxford University, a Master's Degree from Oberlin College and a B.A. from Hillsdale College. In addition, has been awarded honorary doctorates from Highland Park College, Marygrove College, Shaw College and the Urban Bible Institute.

Senator Vaughn has sought to pass his love of learning on to subsequent generations through his teaching at the University of Detroit, Wayne State University and Hartford Memorial Church where he has led the Contemporary Issues Sunday School Class for twenty years.

Senator Vaughn can take pride in his long and honorable service in the Michigan State Senate. I hope my colleagues will join me in saluting Senator Jackie Vaughn for his commitment to Detroit, the State of Michigan and the entire Nation.●

IN RECOGNITION OF RABBI STEVEN WEIL

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Rabbi Steven Weil, who on August 20, 2000, will be honored for over six years of faithful service at Young Israel of Oak Park, the largest Orthodox synagogue in Michigan. Rabbi Weil will soon move to the Los Angeles area to pursue a large pulpit position in another Orthodox synagogue, and this occasion provides the Orthodox Jewish Community of Detroit with an opportunity not only to say good-bye to Rabbi Weil, but also to thank him for the wonderful work he has done during the past six years.

Under the guidance of Rabbi Weil, the congregation of Young Israel doubled in size, an accomplishment which can be directly attributed to his devotion to spreading the tenets of his faith. In addition to developing a lecture and discussion series within his own congregation, he and his wife, Yael, were frequent lecturers at the Agency for Jewish Education and at the Jewish Community Center. He also had an on-going cable television series on the topic of Jewish history.

Rabbi Weil had a vision of creating cohesiveness within the Jewish community and developing future Jewish leadership. He was able to achieve this goal by enacting several different programs, including a trip to Israel and Prague for young Jewish Orthodox, Conservative and Reform couples, as well as a March of the Living Youth Unity Mission. He also headed the Metropolitan Detroit Federation Young